

A Portrait of the Artist: A Cabaret of Artistic Self Discovery

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Artists have been identifying why we create since we started telling our stories. Cabaret is a means of that artistic storytelling that reshaped the musical theatre playing field. Contemporary American cabaret performance, which began back in the 1970s, became a more intimate means of performance that connected the performer to the audience. The word “Cabaret” initially referred to any business serving liquor, or taking place in a bar. The first cabaret performances featured poets, artists and composers sharing their work that wasn’t being featured otherwise. Whether it is a brand new poet just starting to share their work or an experienced composer experimenting with a new genre of music or orchestration, cabaret performance was an open space for any art to be shared and to flourish. It was for this reason I chose the medium of a cabaret performance to share my honors thesis, looking at my journey thus far. This theatrical form allows me to have a personal relationship with the audience and share my intimate journey as an artist thus far using this very moldable form of theatre. It allows me to shape the type of performance I want to give around my personal story and not adhere to the rules of theatre. I performed all genres of music, ranging from indie/alternative to classic musical theatre. I shared personal accounts of how I became an artist, what lessons I have learned from being an artist and where I plan to go from here. All this was possible due to the fluid and flexible nature of the cabaret performance.

Acknowledgements

I would really like to thank Michael Elliot for his support and mentorship during the shaping of this project. His knowledge on this particular mode of theatrical performance made it possible for me to bounce ideas off of him and shape the piece that I performed tremendously.

I also need to thank Sean Woodgett, Flint Davis Robbins and Ethan Hetrick for accompanying me and making this experience run smoothly. Without your help, this show wouldn’t have been possible.

Lastly, I need to thank Nick Johnson and Madison King for their support in shaping and promoting the cabaret, as well as Books & Brews in Muncie for hosting my Honors Thesis.

Table Of Contents

I. Process Analysis Statement	
a. Introduction/Proposal	1
b. Preliminary Research	4
c. Conception	5
d. Creation	6
e. Production	8
f. Marketing and Outreach	10
g. Archiving	11
h. Reflection	12
II. Performance Footage	
a. Link to April 24 th , 2019 Performance	15
b. Link to Rehearsal Footage	15
III. Photos and Printed Materials	
a. Printed Materials	
i. Promotional Flyer	16
ii. Program	17
IV. Works Cited and Works Consulted	18
V. Appendices	
a. Appendix A- Glossary	20
b. Appendix B –Set List	21
c. Appendix C – Script	22

Process Analysis Statement

Introduction/Proposal

“Life is creation – self and circumstances, the raw material”, I believe Dorothy Richardson, said it best when talking about this thing called creation (Richardson, Art of Memory: Space, Identity, Text). Whether you identify as an artist or not, simply being a living, breathing human on this Earth allows us to create. For my Honors Thesis I want to create a raw creative experience that gives my audience a closer look at the journey of an artist. I would like to accomplish this through the art of a cabaret performance.

A cabaret performance is a much more personal, intimate performance style than stage performance and allows there to be a connection between the audience and the actual artist instead of just a character. Cabaret is a form of theatrical entertainment featuring music, song, dance, recitation, poetry or drama. It is mainly distinguished by the performance venue, which might be a pub, a restaurant or a smaller venue with a stage for performances. The audience, often dining or drinking, sits at tables and has a less strict, professional relationship with the performer.

This particular style of project will allow me to share the information I have learned from my time discovering the steps along the way to becoming an artist and also share the personal journey I have had being a performer. The objective and purpose for this cabaret is to utilize my understanding and skill in cabaret performance to understand more clearly what my career path has been, how it has shaped me and where that is leading to now: in short, the journey of the artist. The project outcome will be a physical cabaret performance, which will include songs, both original and written by a variety of composers, as well as poetry, musicianship and patter. I would like to title this cabaret after one of my favorite books and also my favorite puzzle to continually solve for myself, “The Portrait of the Artist”, to share what my life full of creation has taught me

and how it can teach others creators or artists about their journey during this time we have together on this planet.

I want to create this project for my Honors Thesis due to the strong platform that cabaret performance offers to musical theatre performers. It will allow me to combine my craft with my story and share a very intimate part of what has gotten me to this stage of my life where so much is changing. As I prepare to graduate, I want to control the narrative, so to speak, and create a product that allows me to share my views and personal stories about the question “What is an artist?” This project will challenge me. Putting together a cabaret is no easy feat and I am more than ready to push myself to better understand one of my favorite mediums of performance. It is an entirely different style of cabaret show than I have been exposed to or have worked on, as I am controlling the content and using all sorts of different styles of music, both theatrical and non theatrical, to tell this story.

The cabarets I have worked on in the past or seen, have usually been crafted with a theme in mind, much like mine, or they have been crafted with a specific composer in mind. I will have to research the many different perspectives of past artists on what an artist is and then compare and contrast it to my personal journey as a modern performer. The steps to making a cabaret are many and I will have to start by finding a venue, crafting a poster and advertise for my cabaret, build a set list with a flow and some contrasting levels and styles of performance, as well as create personal patter, the anecdotes that relate to each song, and transitions for the entire show. It will help me grow and also allow me to learn how to organize a cabaret by myself while still under the helpful and experienced eye of my advisor. I will be able to ask specific questions when I need them answered as well as have the freedom to craft this performance myself. I will combine music from the musical theatre genre with some pop/rock songs and other music and poetry composed by myself.

As far as a timeline goes, I will spend the rest of my semester until winter break to create a set list, find the venue and make the promotional posters. I will meet with my

advisor weekly for 10-15 minutes to run the newest repertoire in my set list as well as clean any patter and mash-ups. I already of the set list partially built, but I want to have it completely done by the end of November. Between the end of November and when we get back from winter break, I want to have all the personal stories, or patter finalized and written in all the sheet music. By the time I am back from winter break, I want to be able to start full runs of the entire show. I want the show to either be performed in early April or late March, depending on when the venue is available to be used. Ideally I want to use Muncie Civic's studio space, but again if that is unavailable I would like to use Pruis Hall.

My target audience would be my fellow Ball State students. This cabaret explores the question of what it means to be an artist, a creator and a person. This would make it particularly suited to any underclassmen in any of the Fine Arts majors, because it is such an open honest dialogue on what it means to create and the struggles each artist goes through by sharing my own personal experiences. I think the typical college student could take a lot away from the stories of my own personal journey through school because so many people only share the successes in life, but not the struggles, the questions, the insecurities and the lessons creating art teaches you. I know I personally would have loved to hear someone talk about these questions of "where" and "how" to find my creative path post graduation. I will use contemporary music as well as musical theatre music in my cabaret to use terminology and material my audience is familiar with to tackle these tricky topics. They will also inform how I shape my transitions and patter because we speak a similar language and are at a similar point in our life long journey. We can both laugh or cry or ponder the mysteries of growing up, creating, finding love, losing it and shaping our identity because we are all experiencing it in a similar way at this stage of our lives. Whoever comes to this performance will be able to say confidently, that they learned a little bit more about who I am, what theatre is and how art, life and creation, fueled by the raw and real human experience, can truly change the world.

Preliminary Research

To begin my Honors Thesis, I researched the art of cabaret performance. Artists have been identifying why we create since we started telling our stories. Cabaret is a means of that artistic storytelling that reshaped the musical theatre playing field. Contemporary American cabaret performance, which began back in the 1970s, became a more intimate means of performance that connected the performer to the audience. The word “Cabaret” initially referred to any business serving liquor, or taking place in a bar. The first cabaret performances featured poets, artists and composers sharing their work that wasn’t being featured otherwise. Whether it is a brand new poet just starting to share their work or an experienced composer experimenting with a new genre of music or orchestration, cabaret performance was an open space for any art to be shared and to flourish. It was for this reason I chose the medium of a cabaret performance to share my honors thesis, looking at my journey thus far. This theatrical form allows me to have a personal relationship with the audience and share my intimate journey as an artist thus far using this very moldable form of theatre. It allows me to shape the type of performance I want to give around my personal story and not adhere to the rules of theatre. I performed all genres of music, ranging from indie/alternative to classic musical theatre. I shared personal accounts of how I became an artist, what lessons I have learned from being an artist and where I plan to go from here. All this was possible due to the fluid and flexible nature of the cabaret performance.

To create a cabaret, I consulted my advisor, Michael Elliot. He has had experience not only in cabaret performance, but also in guiding students looking to make their own cabaret for an Honors Thesis or for a Capstone. Michael and I met weekly to check in with my progress throughout my last semester of college. He was perfect at shaping my piece, attempting to give me more clarity without directly giving notes or making corrections. In our visits he asked what I had worked on, whether it be patter related or with music and he would ask if I had any questions about it. I would ask things like, “does this chord progression in the mash-up make a coherent change in keys?” or, “can I

read you this patter and see what you think?’. It was through his patient guidance and observation that I was able to put together an entire cabaret with such a focused storyline.

Conception

Before I could do anything else, I had to decide what I wanted my cabaret to be about. I found through my research that cabaret performance can take on a variety of different forms, which was wonderfully freeing yet incredibly difficult to narrow down. First, I looked through examples. I found cabarets that varied in genre, style and purpose. The genre ranged from types of shows as broad as ‘jazz’ to as particular as Rodgers and Hammerstein. As far as style went, many cabarets chose between two routes: a more variety show type of performance or a cabaret with a plot. The advantage of the variety show was that the performance itself did not necessary have to have a cohesive story to it. Rather, you could jump from song to song, giving a brief story to accompany it, pretty much about whatever you chose and not connected to a plot structure. A cabaret with a plot line was a piece of performance that had the through line of a cohesive story. Many of these cabarets were self-reflective pieces and told of the artist’s history up until the point of the show. This idea intrigued me the most as I explored my purpose for making this show. I wanted my audience to leave my cabaret feeling like they knew me better and recognizing themselves in my story. So, I decided to take on the goal of self-actualizing my journey as an artist. With that purpose in mind, I chose a more plot-focused way of stylizing my cabaret. These two important decisions helped me to decide that I wanted to shape a cabaret around my story and not the opposite. I didn’t want to have to come up with anecdotes that fit the genre of an age or composer, as I felt it would not be as authentic and true to my story.

Upon deciding my cabaret was going to be my own personal adventures through life and the lessons they had taught me in relation to how I became an artist and what that means for my future, I had a lot of work cut out for me. The idea itself is a very complex

and open structure for a cabaret. My genre, style and purpose all allowed for so many possibilities. I had the freedom to use pop/rock, musical theatre and singer/songwriter music. I could also add elements like dance, lyrical poetry and personal anecdotes as my tools to further tell my story. For the purpose of my show, I did not want teach the audience about a genre or a composer, but rather to use the music and artistic mediums of my choice to share my story and the lessons life has taught me. So, I dove into my material.

Early on in my process I Skyped my parents to talk through my earlier stories shared in my cabaret. Through our conversations and through watching some of our home movies, that were recorded when I was ages one to eight, I found some great material. Through the hours of footage, I was able to relive some of my best and most embarrassing moments. I wanted to share in my cabaret that both showed how I got into theatre and artistry and showed my personality and so I had to decide between many different anecdotes. I first went through and found the memories I wanted to use and narrowed it down from there. The first draft of my cabaret included stories of my failed trip to Scotland, my brother's iconic laser-tag standoff, my face-plant at Easter when I was four and the time I upstaged my brother's first steps. While not all of these moments found a place in my cabaret, I was so happy to have so many stories to share, and who knows, they may find a place in my next cabaret.

Creation

When creating a cabaret, the majority of the work happens in rehearsal. Very early on in my Creative Honors Thesis, after deciding I wanted to perform my own cabaret, I started looking for a pianist. In cabaret performance, the majority of what is put into the show is shaped by the artist, me. Yet, none of this is able to be performed without someone helping shape the underscoring of the show. Sean Woodgett, my friend and colleague, worked with me in numerous classes across campus. From sophomore year's Singing Actor class to junior year's Scene Study course, he was always an intelligent

collaborator in the room and therefore an obvious choice as my pianist. I approached Sean early my first semester of senior year in order to start shaping the cabaret. We met off and on for a few months, where I progressively gave him more music to rehearse. Every week the set-list for my show changed. We worked diligently and cohesively to arrange the underscoring, to make musical cuts and to assure my patter lined up with the vamps I allotted him. With his help, I was able to make the piece I wanted to share with my audience come to life. Some of the most challenging problem spots in my cabaret, like the “I Like Musicals” medley or the opening number, were able to be sorted through and made palatable due to our teamwork and dedication to my cabaret.

While Sean was a huge contributor to my cabaret rehearsal process, I did a large amount of the work on my own time. I wrote all the dialogue or patter accompanying each song as well as came up with the pieces I would be performing within the fifty-minute show. Through the education I received as part of the Ball State Musical Theatre Option Curriculum, I was able to use my knowledge of cabaret performance as well as music theory to arrange most of my pieces. I had the challenging task of changing multiple keys of my music and shaping the musical cuts to best exemplify the message and purpose of my show. Although most of the sheet music was made available to me through music books and digital libraries, I also had to notate and transcribe some of the pieces I performed in *A Portrait of the Artist*.

With the music aside, I also had to rehearse a great deal of the performance through choreography and blocking. One of the pieces in particular that I wished to elevate through movement was “Murder Song (5, 4, 3, 2, 1)”. This piece was very special to me, as I wanted it to tell the story of my experience with PTSD and sexual assault through a non-direct form of artistry. I chose to enlist a good friend of mine who was a choreographer, Nick Johnson, to establish some physical dialogue for this piece that, along with the lyrics, told my story. He asked me to share, in a very detached way, what sort of abuse I would like to address through my movement. Much like the lyrics of the song I chose to put in my cabaret, I wanted to address physical, mental and sexual abuse and how it wears a victim down, without explicitly stating what had happened in my past.

Fortunately for me, Nick is phenomenal and came up with the first version of the choreography, which I have attached in my rehearsal footage. He was able to eloquently tell the story of a strong individual, who had undergone terrible circumstances and unspeakable abuse. The song I chose dove into the confusion of loving someone who hurt you while the movements progressively got more fatigued and outraged. I couldn't have been happier with the resulting performance in my cabaret and owe Nick a huge thank you for being a supportive friend and collaborator. Through the medium of cabaret performance I was able to address something so impactful to my life without crossing a line and sharing something I don't feel comfortable exposing.

I have to admit, juggling senior year with all its exciting opportunities and commitments while also writing and rehearsing a one-woman cabaret show was challenging, I am so proud of my work. Throughout the course of this year, I have flooded my living room futon with carious versions of my cabaret score, searching over and over again for the perfect combination of songs, patter and stories. Through my rehearsal process I was able to explore without fear of failure. My friends and colleagues who worked alongside me gave me honest feedback as well as their talents to aid the message of my show. I am so proud of the final product and couldn't have gotten to this result without the ability to try and fail, to try again and to ultimately find my voice in the performance I gave.

Production

To get this performance off its feet and capable of being shared, I had to find a venue that fit the character of my show. In looking around the Muncie and Ball State area, I had originally wanted to use the Muncie Civic Theatre's Studio space, yet to finance such a booking was too much for me to utilize their space. This initiated my journey through Muncie's artistic venues in search of the perfect, intimate performance area for my Honors Cabaret. I stumbled upon my good friend's Instagram story, where he

was enjoying a cider and some jazz musicians at Books & Brews. I was not familiar with the space and immediately paid their business a visit. When I went to Books & Brews to speak with the manager, I was instantly charmed with the character of the venue and saw how my show could both be enhanced by the space itself and how their business could be improved through my featured artistry. The manager and I discussed the logistics of me using the space for a cabaret performance and what that would entail, as he too didn't quite understand what this medium of performance was. After discussing the nature of a solo cabaret and how the performative aspect of my Honors Thesis was not the focus of my piece of art, but rather that connecting to the audience and having a conversation through my show was the main goal, he wanted me to use his space. He asked me to send him pre-screen material, with which he could understand the tone of my work and to ensure my abilities were up to par with the professionalism of his establishment. He allowed me to pick my own date for the cabaret, to use Books & Brews sound equipment and perform in his business without putting a deposit down or paying for the space. His reasoning was that he wanted to help a young artist get their start and attract a new type of customer to his business through the use of my cabaret. I was overwhelmed with the support as the true purpose of this artistic endeavor is to connect and share stories with the community. He was that and not only allowed, but encouraged that conversation to be had through the use of my patter and vocal repertoire.

The production was further developed finding the musicians to accompany my event. Traditionally, as I mentioned in my research, a cabaret is accompanied by as little as one instrument, that being the piano. Throughout my rehearsal process, I had a pianist with me to establish the skeleton of my show. Yet, for the purpose of telling my story accurately, I felt I needed more. I wanted to incorporate drums and a guitar simply due to the fact that my style, my 'type', was more of a contemporary rock sounding one. In the musical theatre world, I am very comfortable with musicals featuring rock and pop styling in their score. Therefore, in my own cabaret, I felt it was only necessary to shape the music around my authentic self, both as a individual and as a performer. The process of finding musicians quickly became the hardest part of building the production. After four separate musicians had turned me down or canceled very late in the rehearsal

schedule, I put out a plea to the school of music and to my friends on Facebook. There I was able to connect with my drummer, Flint Davis Robbins and my guitarist, Ethan Hetrick. These two men, who I would not have found if it weren't for those who had canceled on me beforehand, shaped this cabaret into a cohesive piece of art. They took a lot of the pressure off of my shoulders being such talented musicians and made me more able to tell my artistic journey and what it has taught me through the vehicle of the music we made together.

Cabaret art and its production is only made possible with two things: a vision or story that the artist wishes to share and the collaborative minds of talented, smart individuals. I was lucky to have found not only a venue and a band, but rather a group of creative individuals whose goal was to help me paint the picture of my version of 'The Portrait of the Artist'. Having an idea is the easy part, but making that story and that vision come alive, takes an army to put the pieces together.

Marketing and Outreach

A cabaret is nothing without an audience. It is said that theatre is any piece of art that follows these simple steps:

1. The artist observes the world and finds meaning
2. The artist puts that meaning into their art
3. The audience observes art and obtains meaning

Due to this simple logic, the marketing and outreach elements of a cabaret are vitally important to creative process. To make an impact with such an intimate form of theatre as cabaret performance, one must have people to attend and observe the art being shared. Particularly for cabaret performance this is even more essential due to the

conversation-esque nature of the structure of a cabaret. For example, during my cabaret a train went by in between songs and so I used the unexpected noise to allow for the opportunity for audience participation. I asked, “boy these trains are just the best, right?” to which a majority of the audience laughed and boo-ed. It is this very natural back-and-forth nature of cabarets that make the audience not only an observer of the art, but a participant. They help create the theatrical evening that takes place and makes it so individualized and unique that a specific performance of this cabaret can never be replicated exactly the same. So therefore, prominent marketing and outreach was a priority to me in the creation of my cabaret.

To promote my event and to get people in the seat at Books & Brews, I marketed myself many ways. First, I designed my own cabaret’s poster. Using my focused target audience, I hung them accordingly from places on campus like the library or in buildings of theatre classes as well as off-campus locations like The Cup and Muncie Civic Theatre. Knowing that a large part of my audience uses social media, I also promoted on my personal Facebook and Instagram. I created an event page for my cabaret, The Portrait of the Artist, on Facebook and invited many of my peers and friends. From that online event page alone, I received a total of thirty confirmed attendees, which grew in size due to my personal social media page promotion and through word of mouth. By marketing myself with the vision and style I had for the cabaret, I was able to successfully find people who were interested in seeing my one-woman show. The night I performed, I had a total of forty-five individuals who saw me perform due to the various tactics I used to promote my Honors Thesis and reach out to the local community.

Archiving

To archive my performance and to make sure it wasn’t soon forgotten, I enlisted the help of my friend and prominent TCOM student, Payton Tavernier. With Payton’s help, I was able to record the evening, with a high-quality piece of recording equipment

and get candid photos of the performance and the celebration afterwards. I was able to get Payton to come record and photograph the evening due to my longstanding, positive working relationship with the TCOM department through my involvement in their student films. Payton and I have worked together on many films and it was through this previous relationship we were able to work cohesively to accurately capture my cabaret.

Payton came in with a setup of his own and was able to quickly and efficiently stakeout an area in the crowd to record from. His two cameras made it so he could take pictures of my performance and of my friends and peers while also recording the entire cabaret. With one continuous shot, instead of many different segmented recordings of just the songs, I was able to capture the night as it was: with all its imperfections and surprises, with the laughs or tears of the audience and with every moment of joy that lit up my face.

By having this performance on tape, I am able to continue my professional cabaret journey. Much like with the manager and owner of Books& Brews, cabaret venues want to see samples of your work before they allow you to perform at their business. By having my entire cabaret recorded, I now have material to put together my cabaret reel. A reel is a collection of filmed clips that show you off at your best as a theatrical performer. Often times, a reel can act in the place of an audition and allow for the creative team or business owner to see your work and decide if they want to be a part of it. By having this readily accessible footage of me performing my own cabaret, I am able to advertise myself further and build my career in the art of cabaret performance.

Reflection

Over forty-five people came to “A Portrait of the Artist: A Cabaret of Artistic Self Discovery” and I was shocked. In seeing the attendance of my peer’s cabaret and with knowing the date of the performance was during a busy time of year, I was expecting an intimate audience of twenty-to-twenty five people. I was so thrilled to see, not only the

number of people who attended the cabaret, but also the amount of positive feedback I received after the performance. Friends and professors and peers all came up to me with smiles on their faces and tears in their eyes. They all raved about my work, saying it was beautiful and meant to be shared. These comments made me so happy, but the thing that struck me the most were the comments from people I didn't even know. Many people, who had came to the bar that night for the drinks and who had stumbled on my performance, told me I was talented and that they felt they could say they knew me now after experiencing my art. As they shared their own life experienced that mirrored or shared similar traits of mine, I felt a wave of pride wash over me. It is for moments like these, those innocent interactions with complete strangers, which is why cabaret is still relevant today. As a cabaret artist, you take the stage with a promise that you are playing yourself tonight, an honor very few get to witness if you are a musical theatre performer, such as myself. When you make those connections with people and allow for your audience to feel like they have gotten to know you and recognized pieces of themselves in your story, you have done your work well.

All this feedback aside, I would like to explore the little changes I could make to my cabaret to make it cleaner and clearer before remounting it. Due to the fact that cabaret performance relies on the audience as part of the production, I didn't quite know how the show was going to run by just rehearsing it. It wasn't until I was able to perform it, with a full house that I felt the moments that landed and the moments that missed the mark. A majority of my cabaret was very successful in connecting and openly sharing my story- jokes, songs, sips of cider and all. Yet, there were a few hiccups in the dialogue that I think could be easily fixed. By having an audience to play off of, you are able to feel the tone of the room and luckily enough for me, it was a very friendly audience. I want to ensure my cabaret performance in the future is able to run smoothly with an audience of only people I don't know as well.

Overall, I am quite proud of the work I was able to accomplish this semester. Alongside the New York Showcase, multiple trips to and from New York for callbacks and still maintaining a good work ethic while taking an eighteen-credit-hour semester,

building a one-woman show was not easy. There were no rules to cabaret performance I had to follow and no templates I could copy paste to my story, it all had to come from me. And for that, I am so incredibly excited to continue my skill development in this medium of theatre and expand my cabaret relevancy so I can continue to be a cabaret performer for the rest of my career.

Link to April 24th Performance

<https://ballstate.box.com/s/wd0h7dbbjrxrzsds49tn39eu59dq6qul>

Link to Rehearsal Footage

<https://youtu.be/N8MWc3maKNg>

Printed Material

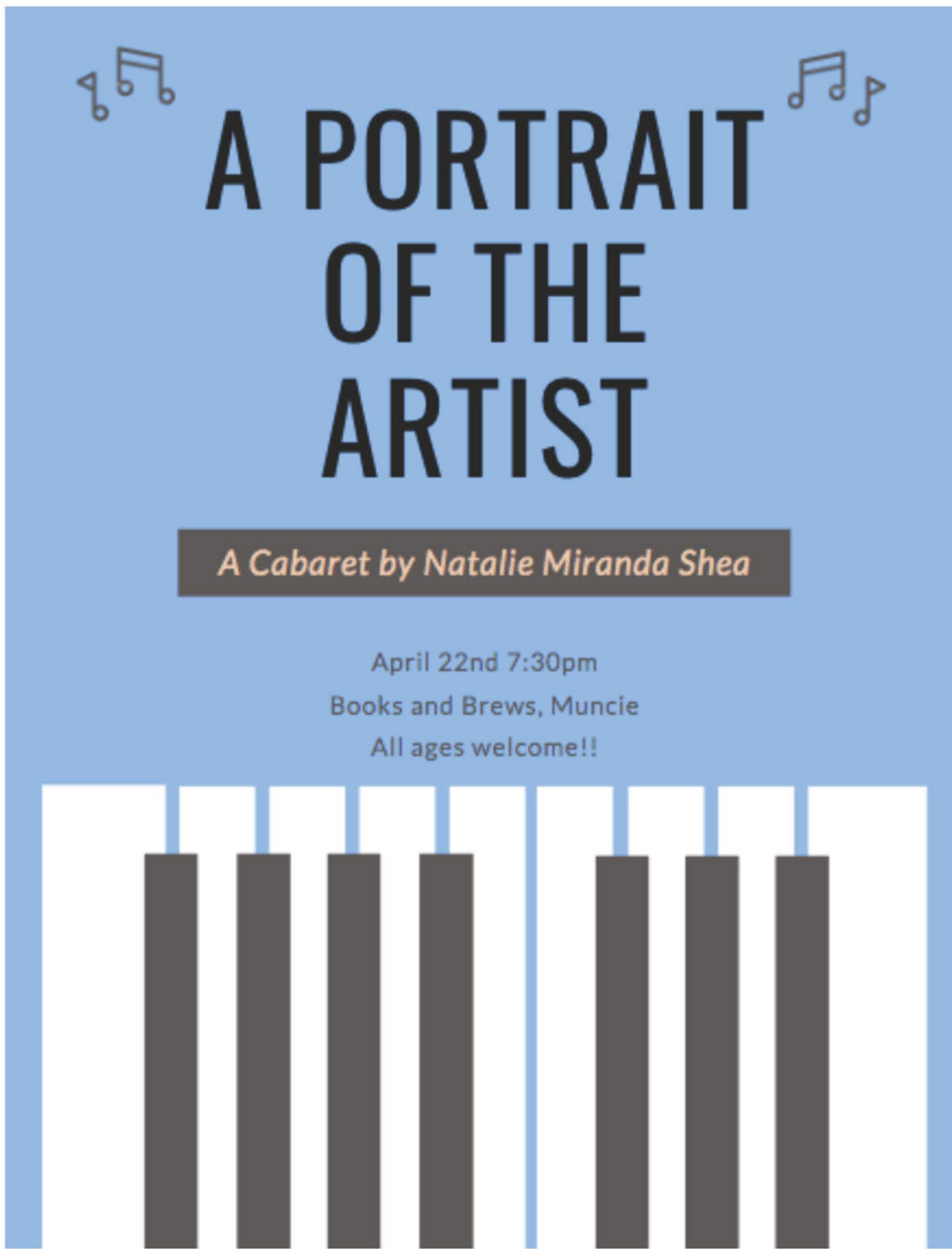


Figure 1: Poster



Figure 2: Program

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Appendix A

Glossary of Cabaret and Theatrical Related Terms:

Patter- The dialogue of a Cabaret performance spoken before, after or in the middle of a song to aid the story

Type- A theatrical term for describing the character traits one plays well (ex: I am the strong, leading lady type)

Cabaret- A type of theatrical performance where the actor does not play a character, but rather is themselves and uses theatrical modes to tell a story of their choosing,
-Traditionally in a smaller, more intimate space/often a place that serves alcohol

Repertoire- The vocal selections a singer has in their ‘book’

Book- The physical collection of music a singer is using for a performance/audition

Pre-Screen Material- Video/Audio recordings sent to a business or company to give a sample of an artist’s work

Button- The ending tag of a song

Tacet- A musical term meaning that an instrument or instruments are not playing/not sounding for a specific song (ex: piano and drums were tacet for the piece “Murder Song (5, 4, 3, 2, 1)” in my cabaret)

Mash-up- A collection of portions of songs all performed as one piece (ex: my ‘I Like Musicals’ piece had cuts of four other songs performed in the duration of the song ‘I Like Musicals’)

Cue- A verbal or physical indication the singer gives to the musician or musicians accompanying to indicate they are starting a song and/or moving back into the song from patter.

Appendix B

Portrait of the Artist: A Cabaret of Artistic Self Discovery

Set List:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1) Putting it Together- | Piano |
| 2) I Gotta Crow- | Piano |
| 3) Look At Me- | Piano |
| 4) I Like Musicals- | Piano and Band |
| a. In My Life | |
| b. I Know It's Today | |
| c. Everything Else | |
| d. Pharaoh Story | |
| 5) Murder, He Says- | Piano and Drums |
| 6) Hold Down the Fort- | Piano |
| 7) Expectations of a Man/Changing My Major- | Piano |
| 8) Murder Song (5,4,3,2,1) - | Guitar |
| 9) You Learn - | Piano and Band |
| 10) I'm A Star- | Piano and Band |
| 11) Running- | Piano |

Appendix C

Pre Show

Thank you all so much for coming, my name is Natalie Miranda Shea and I am so thrilled to share: The Portrait of the Artist, a cabaret looking at my journey thus far! Before we get started, I ask that you please silence your cell phones and if you find you are able, I invite you to drop some spare change in the donation buckets or send me a small amount thru venmo at Natalie_Shea446 as every dollar I receive tonight will be used to help me pack up and move my life to New York. By donating and simply by being here tonight you are helping me take the next steps into my future as a performer! I've worked really hard on this cabaret and so I thank you so much for being here, it means a lot and I hope you are all able to find parts of yourself in my story tonight.

So let's rock and roll!

Script:

- **Putting It Together**

I can't believe I'm finally graduating, right now on my degree works, the only thing I have left to complete is this, this thing I'm doing right now. And i have to admit it was not easy. The one thing I've learned in my four years here, is it isn't easy, but as my mother says "if it were easy everyone would do it". And honestly I wouldn't want to

spend my time doing anything else, because at the end of the day: I love what I do and I am so excited for what's next...even when it kicks my ass

- **Putting It Together**

But you know what I did it and it was challenging to do with so much of my life happening right now, but damn I'm really proud of it, even when it's hard

- **Putting it Together Button**

Everyone has that super special thing that made them want to be an artist. For me was the musical Peter Pan and boy did it change my life. I was 4, but I knew that performing was what I wanted to do. At intermission of the Broadway Touring Company of Peter Pan starring Cathy Rigby my mom told me we could go buy a little treat and while she was showing me the Tinkerbelle wings and the Wendy Darling lockets, I was looking at peter pan's hat.

“Mom, look a hat! THE Peter Pan Hat!”

“Oh, it's just a silly hat”

“Yes but I want it, so much more than the wings or lockets. Oh how charming I would be!”

“Well of course, they are charming, but you're a girl”

“A Girl? But see- it's just that I am what I am and I'm me....

“When I look on that stage, and I see who she plays, oh mom Peter Pan could be me! If I'm sure of myself, I have every good reason to be”

Seeing the light in my little four-year-old eyes, my mom couldn't say no. And so she bought me the hat and damn I didn't take that thing off until it broke because when I wore it, I felt magical

From that moment on there was no denying I caught the theatre bug and soon I was acting like the whole damn world was my stage. My parents were big on filming me and my brother growing up and every time the camera turned on it was always:

- **Look At Me**

And while my hunger for the spotlight sometimes got a little annoying it also led to some of my most embarrassing moments, which are played on repeat at my house over any breaks that I get to be home. The highlights include: the time I wanted to get the most Easter eggs and fell flat on my face trying to retrieve one, the time I performed the entire Shrek soundtrack in my underwear for my parents and the time I upstaged my younger brothers first steps.

(Cut underscoring)

Yes, I really did. My brother who was taking his very first steps on camera suddenly was blocked by my enormous head jumping in front of the camera

saying, “I play the violin” like what??? This was supposed to be so cool- my parents were going to get Nolan’s first steps on camera but I needed people to....

- **Look At Me**

My parents, seeing that I desperately needed an artistic outlet, enrolled me in theatre camps and from there I flourished. I felt found where I belonged....at least in my artistic world. Because at school it was another story. High school was rough. It’s rough for everyone but being the theatre nerd in Fargo, ND was a whole other story. The funny thing is the even the theatre crowd thought I was weird. Apparently, wanting to rehearse the dance break or work on my vocal rep on a friday night instead of having a Rocky Horror Picture Show movie sleepover made me “weird”.

And most of the time it didn’t bother me, but sometimes I just thought...

- **I Like Musicals**

And musicals gave me the confidence to not need anyone else’s approval: My high school experience truly revolved around the theatre and I was pretty damn lucky because I got to star in some of my favorite musicals, lemme give you a sample:

- **I Like Musicals Medley**

I am so thankful for every one of my mentors who believed in me who gave me the opportunities I had because I was really lucky. So even when high school was weird and friends came and went, I always had musicals to belt in my car. I would start the engine, crank up the volume and say .. HIT IT

- **I Like Musicals Button**

A big part of my last two years of high school was looking and auditioning for Musical Theatre programs across the country. I went to Chicago Unifieds with my dad to do a bunch of auditions and the most magical thing happened. Now I have to tell you, I believe that things happen for a reason, so when one Miss dame Jodi cotton hurried into our elevator at the hotel with her arms full, I think the universe meant for my dad and I to help her. We grabbed her piano and some of her sheet music she had with her and helped her set up the Ball State room at Unifieds. After we finished, she said how grateful she was and said “ I see those nude heels and that two toned dress, come audition for us”

To be honest I had no idea what Muncie, Indiana was or Ball state for that matter, but I walked over to the pianist, introduced myself and sang one of my three audition songs and it went a little something like this:

(nod)

- **Murder, He Says**

So I was all set and ready to start the next chapter of my life away at Ball State University (chirp chirp). I was so excited and everything about it felt so right. It all felt so easy, except for one thing: leaving my family in Fargo, North Dakota more specifically my little brother. Nolan Michael Shea is not your typical little brother. He and I didn't really fight growing up and we were the best of buds. We played video games, we went for long cruises with the best of tunes and we were always there for each other. I remember as he helped me pack for college I would try to talk to him about me leaving:

- **Hold Down the Fort**

Nolan is my 18 year old little brother although he is way taller than me now, he is compassionate, an animal whisperer and has this insane way of listening to someone that it makes you want to tell him everything. And his secret talent: Nolan is a mastermind musician. He starting playing guitar maybe 3 years ago simply because he wanted to and soon he was making his own music while buying used guitars left and right and rebuilding them. He is so wickedly smart. And while I won't be there for all of these exciting moments, I just want to tell him.

- **Hold Down The Fort**

And so my family and I packed ourselves into our Toyota Tacoma and headed for the great state and apparent meth capital of the United States: Indiana. As we drove the 16hrs

passing cornfields and cows galore I started to question my choice.... But when I arrived the department felt like home. So I started to figure out this whole college thing- studying and making friends and making FRIENDS...

- **Expectations of a Man**

And so I started dating, looking for that one special someone and boy did I meet some losers There was that guy from the coffee shop, Chris and then the tinder date, Chris oh and then there was that guy I met at the Chug... Chirs was it?...I don't know, I had a thing for Chrises but lemme tell you, none of them worked out. Each of those relationships went horribly sour in their own special way. But I wasn't deterred- I knew my person was out there, so I kept on dating.

- **Expectations of a Man**

He broke up with me in my childhood bedroom while we were on spring break in Fargo ND, where he came with to support me before a major medical procedure. What a dick!?

- **Expectations of a Man (Segue)**

- **Changing My Major**

So if you couldn't tell I'm queer, I like humans ya know? Any and all varieties are great. I just love who I love. I identify as Pansexual, which means I like pans, sorry

stupid joke but you'd be surprised how many people ask me that. It really means I don't care how someone identifies; I fall for the personality of the person.

And I for one am guilty of falling too hard. And that's the hard thing about love is it is a passionate ordeal. And sometimes love blinds you, sometimes things get a little out of hand.

- **Murder Song...**

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This is an issue that is very near and dear to my heart and I hope that with this song, I can be a voice to those, who for whatever reason, feel like they have none.

- **You Learn**

And so I left that situation in my past, because it does not control me or define me, but I will always carry with me what it taught me.

- **You Learn Button**

I have learned a lot about myself during my time here at Ball State. Now this department is a great place to hone your craft and train as an artist because they treat you as a unique individual who has really helped me be my fully authentic self when I perform.

I just wish I could tell my younger year self, who was resentfully singing “My White Knight” in singing actor and doing more studying than performing, don’t worry. This is part of the process. You’ll get to the fun stuff.

So now please enjoy “the fun stuff”

- **I’m A Star (Spoken at the beginning)**

I want to thank you all for coming out tonight. I know we are all super busy and everyone is running to the finish line and it means the world to me. If you enjoyed yourself, I invite you to drop some money in the donation buckets!

I have a lot of people to thank for their love and support, because I couldn’t have done this on my own: to my band Sean Woodgett, Flint Robbins and Sir Ethan Coolie the Second damn you rock, to Books and Brews thank you for your beautiful venue, and to those who helped me put the show together, Madison King, Nick Johnson, Michael Elliot and the Honors College here at Ball State THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart!

Mom, Dad and Nolan although you aren’t here tonight, thanks for being streamed in and supporting my dreams I love you!

As I prepare to graduate in a week, holy shit, I have to say: I don't know what the future holds. All I know is I am moving to New York BFA in hand and just going to start doing the damn thing. And I know it will be hard, but I am so beyond ready:

- **Running**

END OF SHOW